

REMARKS

Claims 2, 4-16, and 18 remain in this application. Claim 17 was previously canceled. Claims 1, 3, and 19 are currently canceled. No claims have been or are currently withdrawn.

Claims 20-37 are new.

The examiner has acknowledged that claims 9, 11, 12, and 18 are allowed.

I. CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 U.S.C. § 103

A. Examiner's Statements

The examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-8, and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hansen, et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 20021007861 A1) in view of Hopper (U.S. Patent No. 3,378,673).

The examiner also rejected claims 4, 10, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hansen, et al. and Hopper as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Montieth et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,294,780).

B. Claims 1-3, 5-8, and 13-16

Claims 1 and 3 are canceled.

Claims 2, 5-8, and 13-16 have been amended to depend from allowed claim 9. As independent claim 9 is allowable, the applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 2, 5-8, and 13-16 are also allowable.

II. AMENDMENTS MADE NOT RELATED TO PATENTABILITY

The applicants have amended claims 9, 11, and 18 for matters of format and not for purposes of patentability.

These statements are not an admission that the other amendments were made for purposes of patentability, meant to be limiting in any way, or meant to be all-inclusive of amendments not made for purposes of patentability.

III. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The examiner stated that claims 9, 11, 12, and 18 are allowed..

IV. NEW CLAIMS

The applicants add new claims 20-37 that depend from allowed claims 11 and 18. New claims 20-37 involve similar subject matter as dependent claims 2-8 and 13-16.

V. STATEMENT REGARDING CLAIMS

The applicants comment on the allowability of the claims by addressing the examiner's comments in this paper as well as previously during the prosecution of this application. By doing so, the applicants are in no way limiting their ability to identify additional points of novelty regarding the independent claims or dependent claims at a later date.

CONCLUSION

The applicants respectfully request reconsideration the non-allowed claims and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite the resolution of this case, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

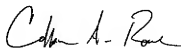
In the course of the foregoing discussions, the applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. There may also be other distinctions between the claims and the prior art that have yet to be raised, but that may be raised in the future.

Unless the applicants have specifically stated that an amendment was made to distinguish the prior art, it was the intent of the amendment to further clarify and better define the claimed invention and the amendment was not for the purpose of patentability. Further, although the applicants may have amended certain claims, the applicants have not abandoned their pursuit of obtaining the allowance of these claims as originally filed and reserve, without prejudice, the right to pursue these claims in a continuing application.

Appl. No. 10/525,106
Amdt. Dated November 30, 2006
Reply to final Office Action of September 5, 2006

If any fees are inadvertently omitted or if any additional fees are required or have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Conley Rose, P.C. Deposit Account Number 03-2769 (ref. 2135-00600) of Conley Rose, P.C., Houston, Texas.

Respectfully submitted,
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.



Collin A. Rose
Reg. No. 47,036
P.O. Box 3267
Houston, TX 77253-3267
(713) 238-8000 (Phone)
(713) 238-8008 (Fax)